

Question and Answers for Presentations of Missouri State of the Workforce Report

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About the System Expenditure Pie Chart

Q. Are you sure the information in your presentation for funding the Department of Corrections is accurate?

A. Yes, the slide that displays a pie chart, with expenditures from each of seven major state agencies accurately indicates the percentage of expenditures by the Missouri Department of Corrections for workforce development in fiscal year 2002.

Q. Do you have the expenditure data, in the format as shown on your early slide, for the latest year?

A. No, we have not completed a new resource survey to develop a new expenditure distribution pie chart? We have held discussions that such a survey should be conducted on a regular basis, but no conclusive actions have been agreed to about that.

About Alternatives Considered in Developing the State of the Workforce Report

Q. What about a program that guaranteed students ready to work, or they were reschooled, did your study consider that program?

A. Yes, well that has been a very successful program experienced by some local school districts; a type of an education and skill warranty. However, the State of the Workforce report recommendations are aimed at application on a statewide basis, and there has not been clear evidence that such a program is feasible on a statewide basis.

Q. Did the State of the Workforce report research look into school vouchers and how they might be implemented?

A. No, the report did not research and evaluate school voucher programs.

About the MTEC Endorsement Request

Q. May we endorse your report, with our own qualifications?

A. We would like your formal endorsement, stating such on your organization letterhead. However, if you wish to clearly state the qualifications or conditions under which you endorse part or all of these recommendations, we would welcome your input.

Q. Given this is the Governor's report, has he seen it and what has been his reaction?

A. The Governor has authorized us to go forward in explaining and informing a variety of organizations about the report and what is contained within it.

Q. Is this the Governor's report?

A. Yes, the Missouri Training and Employment Council are members appointed by the Governor (approved by the Senate) and it is the Governor's report.

Q. Will this report be used for a political agenda?

A. The Missouri Training and Employment Council is a non-partisan board. It is not the Council's purpose to create political platforms, rather to establish workforce development policy.

Q. What will our endorsement mean to your Council?

A. Your endorsement will serve as evidence of widespread information and broad statewide support for moving to implement the report recommendations.

About Potential Costs and Impact

Q. Has there been a cost-benefit analysis of these recommendations?

A. No there has not been a thorough cost-benefit analysis of these recommendations. However, it is important to remember that MTEC is a policy council and we think the recommendations set parameters for sound policy that must be backed by actions and funding for implementation.

Q. Will there be a cost benefit analysis of these recommendations?

A. Absolutely, the appropriate entity charged with implementing these recommendations will conduct a cost-benefit analysis of some type. Unfortunately, these will not be available prior to our seeking your endorsement.

Q. In regard to recommendation number three “High school graduation requirements must be more rigorous including four years of English and three years each of Social Studies, Mathematics and Science. This initiative must be linked with a more proactive policy to strengthen teacher preparedness.”

- Changing the high school graduation requirement will be costly both in actual public dollars expended and in the potential increase in dropout rates. Has the necessary groundwork been laid to prepare districts and AEL contractors for these possibilities?
- Of major concern is how smaller schools will be able to administer these requirements? How will the schools administer? With smaller budgets for our school districts, how will this initiative be funded? How and when will this initiative be implemented? Will this affect the high school dropout rate?

A. Current Missouri graduation requirements for Core courses are: 3 years of English and 2 years each for Social Studies, Mathematics and Science or 3-2-2-2. The State of Missouri's Workforce recommendation would increase each core subject by 1 year or 4-3-3-3. There is no one answer or response we can provide that would apply statewide. Many school districts in Missouri already require graduation requirements of 4-3-3-3, and some school districts exceed this recommendation.

Currently the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's High School Task Force is also drafting a recommendation regarding the graduation requirement issue, as well as other areas related to high school reform. The task force will make recommendations to the State Board of Education in a final report to be completed by March of 2005. The task force includes teachers, principals, counselors, school board members, superintendents, vocational school directors,

higher education officials, as well as representatives of business and labor groups, the Missouri Training and Employment Council, the high school principals' association and the Missouri State High School Activities Association.

About Specific Education System Impact

Q. An individual suggested that the MAP (Missouri Achievement Assessment Program) might be replaced by a new test?

A. The House and the Senate (SB 1080) have both sent a bill to the Governor that would change the MAP requirements to meet, but not exceed, the levels for the National Assessment of Educational Progress. If the Governor signs this bill, the change must be in place by June 30, 2006.

Q. If the ACT test is required to supplant the MAP, who will pay for the exam fee?

A. We do not think it possible to answer this question. The University of Missouri – Kansas City, recently completed a study on the relationship between the MAP test and the ACT; however, that inquiry is still a study in progress without clear answers.

Q. What will the Task Force on the High School be looking at?

A. The task force will recommend ways to strengthen the State's Public High Schools which may include a variety of approaches, such as: changes in policy and regulations; assessing current strengths and weaknesses; curriculum evaluation; review of rigor; benchmarking graduation requirements; teacher development; etcetera.

Q. If graduation rates are increased, where would the funding come from for the additional instruction?

A. This would have to come from budgeted revenues. We realize the recommendations come with implementation costs, but ask your support of them as appropriate policy.

Q. What would this affect the dropout rate, what would be the impact?

A. We know from prior experience of other states that there would be an impact but national studies have shown that it would vary. We cannot be certain of the impact, but acknowledge that it would be an impact that would have to be concurrently dealt with.

Q. Do we really know the skills needed, what we should teach?

A. We are proposing that the recommendations lend themselves to getting closer to knowing, by a policy of requiring study of skills needs, with better labor market information and analysis.

Q. Are we forgetting the importance of vocational education?

A. MTEC continues to support vocational training and the value it has in workforce preparation. We are not in any way suggesting to cut out vocational training. We think the recommendations support a better way to bring out labor market and skills needs to more closely align vocational education with what is needed by communities.

Q. With smaller school budgets, how will this initiative be funded?

A. We lack a definitive answer for this.

Q. When will this initiative be implemented?

A. We lack a definitive answer for this.

About Comparative Indicators used in the Report

Q. Where did Missouri stand in comparison to other states?

A. Unfortunately, there are a number of areas where Missouri is in the “middle of the pack,” and generally our State of the Workforce research suggests the same. We are comparatively in the middle of many measures, not at the bottom, but few measures for which we are at the top. Our recommendations are not about pulling Missouri up from the bottom, rather they are about pushing Missouri toward excellence, moving toward the top.

Q. If your report suggests that some states, including Missouri, may be exporting skilled workers, so what, what does that matter or mean?

A. It would never be a good thing to be exporting job skills. Economic Development planning and growth are best accommodated by communities and regions retaining/keeping skilled workers in their regions. Communities shown to be exporting skilled workers should strive to retain them.

About the Recommendations

Q. Within the recommendations, is a foreign language requirement mentioned?

A. We have not explicitly described a foreign language requirement in our recommendations; however, it is true our research certainly did consider that. The full report actually encourages a foreign language requirement of two years.

Q. If these high school graduation requirement changes are made, they would take effect when?

A. The process involved would require approximately six years to complete. That incorporates endorsement, acceptance, appropriate legislative changes to State law and accommodating students currently in the education system being required to adjust toward a different graduation/outcome target.

Q. Are all of the agencies involved in these recommendations supportive of them?

A. Yes, we have a majority approval of all State agencies represented by the Council for these recommendations.

Q. What does the Department of Education (Elementary and Secondary) think about these recommendations?

A. These recommendations are recognized by all agencies as a major challenge that will not be simple or inexpensive; rather worth their positive impact in the long run.

Q. Where does the literacy information come from?

A. The National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS), last completed in 1992. The next NALS report for FY 2003 data should be available in the fall of 2004. The NALS is a nationally representative and continuing assessment of the English language literacy skills for adult's age 16 and older.

About the Executive Summary

Q. The data in the Executive Summary about individuals taking themselves out of the labor force, no longer looking for work, what is the source of that data and is it explained in the full report?

A. The data indicating individuals no longer looking for work does have the data source explained in the full report. Who are those individuals, the report does not specifically describe them. As to what types of individuals, they are primarily the long-term unemployed and most disadvantaged/poor individuals. Many are also mentally ill and developmentally disabled. As a matter of fact, a disproportionate number of persons who are veterans and disabled veterans also frequently quit looking for work.

Comments

(these are comments that were made generally; they were not stated as questions and were not answered, they were acknowledged only as comments)

- In a time period of budget crisis and redirecting funding away from education, I think you have an overwhelming challenge.
- I think there is a tremendous bias against, very limited funding for, workforce development for offenders (Missouri Department of Corrections).
- These education reform and innovation recommendations appear to be in stark opposition to the reality position the Governor has taken in withholding funding from education. Seems like a conflicted message.
- I think we have a tremendous problem in this State with social promotion (of students in elementary school) that does not appear to be addressed in your report.
- I think you will create an upsurge in students dropping out of high school.
- A commenter mentioned that it would be helpful to have someone such as an A+ Coordinator, or a teacher, as a participant on the MTEC Education and Training Committee. A responding comment is that we would welcome either to work with us. If there are particular individuals you would like to suggest as committee members, please let us know.
- A commenter suggested that the work of the local WIB should be working with the State. We welcome that communication and discussion.
- An individual expressed concern that the Task Force on the High School has no one representing Kansas City, the second largest school system in the State. We suggested that DESE would be notified of this comment and asked if a representative of Kansas City may be consulted.
- The public awareness aspect is vital to the success of achieving significant change. The needs vary so much from one part of the state to the other; rural differences; metro differences. The connection needs to be made that the rural out-state destiny is tied to the urban centers. This is an important economic issue for the state.
- The regional analysis about the labor force already exists. Perhaps MTEC should be concentrating on those regions that are not taking advantage of the information already available and assist with training as needed.

- Many WIBs have already completed regional State of the Workforce reports. MTEC may want to find out more about the activities of the regions and again concentrate on the regions needing the most help rather than making an across the board determination that everyone needs to do the same thing.
- The wording of the recommendation for supportive services is almost the same going back some time ago to those needing additional attention. Our programs are already designed largely for women. We continue to raise this issue about men. Young men 18-35 have needs but unless there is a child involved, there is little assistance available. We need to do more to serve young men.
- There continues to be a service training issue between WIA and Social Services. WIA staff are seeing too many referrals that are not work ready, many customers sent for job placement or training have special issues such as mental health and it is not possible to send them out for an interview. Social services has limited exceptions for when a customer can be referred back to them. Many are not receiving the services/assistance they should such as mental health referrals. More work is needed in this area. Will any of the \$25 million dollar bonuses that Social Services received for training go to the regions?
- There will be difficulty in the variance around the state in graduation requirements.
- It will be a major concern as to how smaller schools will be able to administer a change in graduation requirements. Smaller schools do not have the staff or resources available to teach additional course requirements.
- If students were to fail a class one semester, they would be required to make up that credit in order to graduate. In doing so, it could limit or cause the student to be unable to take technical electives, especially for those students who may not excel academically but do well in technical classes. It would appear the new graduation requirement would not provide much flexibility in these situations.